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## OLD GALLOONS

There has recently been presented to the Museum a collection of old hand-made Italian and French galloons, laces and fringes of gold, silver and silk. The collection includes Italian specimens of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and French examples covering the period from the early part of the seventeenth century to the middle of the eighteenth.

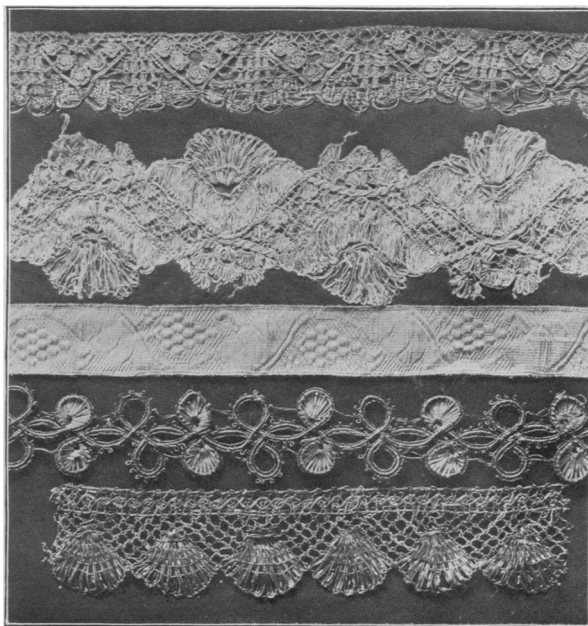
The word galloon is anglicized from the French *galon*, which, although meaning lace, has an entirely different significance from the French word *dentelle*, which also means lace. The word *galon* may refer to any gimp, braid or passementerie which is made of gold or silver thread. The word *dentelle* is used to describe a lace made of thread, silk or flax; if made of gold or silver, a mesh is the essential feature whereby it may be classified as *dentelle* rather than *galon*.

Gold and silver thread and wire, also strips of the beaten metal, have been used from remote times by the people of Western Asiatic countries to enrich textiles. The wire and threads were woven into the stuff, and the strips of metal inwrought, with a needle of some sort, after the textile had been woven.

The Greeks not only used gold and silver in the form of wire and thread, but cut discs from the beaten leaf metal and applied them to a textile material as the *paillettes* or spangles of to-day are applied. The stuffs thus decorated were mostly of flax or wool, as silk was not generally known or used until the sixth century A. D.

The principal ornamentation of the garments and hangings of the ancients was a band of embroidery which formed the edge, or border; this band was often heavily wrought with gold.

The Assyrians and Babylonians, as early as the ninth century B. C., added a fringe placed below the band. Thus it will be seen that the band, which was the precursor of what is now known as gimp, and the fringe are both known to be of very remote origin. In more modern times the island of Cyprus formed

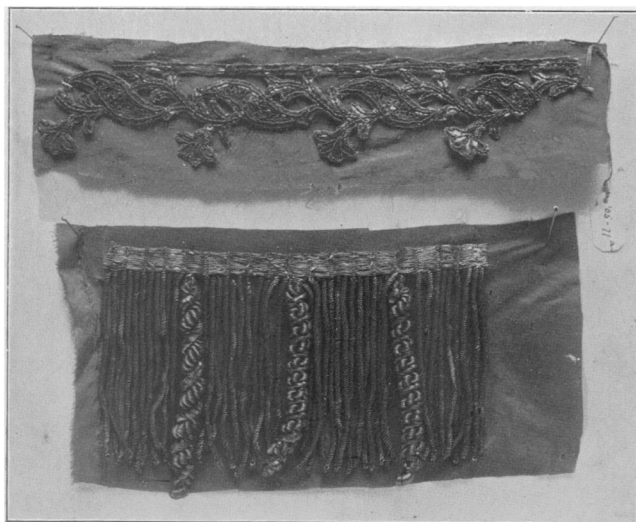


OLD GALONS

The upper Three are Silver, the lower Two Gold

the gateway from the Orient to Occidental Europe for introducing the knowledge of enriching textiles with gold and silver. Cyprus had been colonized in turn by both Phoenicians and Greeks, and from these people the Cypriotes learned much of the art of spinning wire and threads from the metal, and during the fifteenth century made the most beautiful gold and silver galloons and fringes.

Cyprus at that time, being under Venetian rule, found the Republic of Venice the largest purchaser of its fabrics. It would have been difficult to surpass at this period the magnificence of the apparel and furnishings of the Venetians which were enriched with the costliest productions of Cyprus. Illustration No. 2 shows a specimen of fifteenth century Cypriote *passementerie*. It was made by winding narrow strips of silver around a foundation of raw silk. The



SILVER PASSEMENTERIE AND GOLD BULLION FRINGE  
Eighteenth Century

silver is as bright to-day as when made, showing that the people of that time were possessed of some knowledge, unknown to us, whereby the metal was kept from tarnishing. With the passing of Cyprus from Venetian rule, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, Venice began to make her own galloons. Genoa, a close rival of Venice, also became known as a centre for the making of these fabrics. Those of Genoa were quite

distinctive from the fabrics of Venice, although the principles of construction were the same in both.

Illustration No. 1 is a sixteenth century Genoese *passementerie* of silver, worked on a foundation of silk, with a pattern of triangular compartments filled with wheat-ear brides and an irregular mesh. This specimen may be classified as lace, owing to the introduction of the mesh.

The extravagant use of these gold and silver fabrics caused the Council of the Republic to pass a sumptuary law which forbade the wearing of gimps and fringes that were over two inches in width. An old Genoese decree allowed the wearing of gold and silver laces only when outside the city walls.

Laws were made in different countries prohibiting the uses of such rich fabrics as were not made in the country itself. These various edicts were but a revival of ancient customs. Sumptuary laws are of remote origin.

Lycurgus in giving laws to the Lacedæmonians thought that he could not

do better to eliminate luxury than to banish the arts and trades which served only for pleasure and vanity. The Roman Republic, after the second Punic War, published a law, at the instigation of the Tribune, governing apparel; this law was put forth against the great who flaunted their luxury in the eyes of the poor.

Julius Cæsar issued an edict forbidding the wearing of purple and jewels except among persons of certain rank, who were allowed to wear the purple only on occasions of ceremony. Cæsar's successors issued laws regulating the wearing of richly ornamented garments so that the different classes could readily be distinguished from one another.

The first sumptuary laws in France were made by Charlemagne, but that sovereign set such an example of simplicity to his subjects that there was little need of an edict regulating matters concerning apparel. Philippe le Bel allowed no one of the middle class to own more than two robes at a time. Charles VIII allowed the nobility to wear silken garments, but forbade them cloth or *passement* of gold or silver. The early Valois rulers of the sixteenth century endeavored to restrict the use of luxurious apparel to the Court, but with the marriage of the Duc d'Orleans and Catherine de Medicis the richest stuffs were adopted by all those who could afford to wear them. Louis XIV issued thirty-two ordinances against the prevailing extravagances of the time. The remarkable feature of the sumptuary laws of all countries was that in most instances they were so little enforced that they were soon revoked.

Illustration No. 6 is a gold bullion fringe of the time of Louis XIV. The fringe is enriched at intervals by a spiral ornament of elaborate workmanship.

During the period of the regency and of the reign of Louis XV. fashion demanded the lavish use of adornments. The specimen, illustration No. 7, is a Louis XV *passementerie* made of silver *paillettes* or spangles which are sewed on to a foundation of cloth. The example formed a portion of the garniture for a man's coat.

Illustration No. 3 shows a gold *passement* of a style used extensively from the seventeenth century both in Italy and France. The shell-shaped ornaments which terminate so as to form a scalloped edge are made of strips of the metal wound over silk; these ornaments are connected by a mesh.

Illustration No. 4 is a *passementerie* of the period of Louis XVI and consists of a double *guilloche* band; the loops are embellished with *picots* after the fashion of lace. Many of the *galons* of the eighteenth century were of the nature of lace; the mesh in this example resembles that of certain old Flemish laces.

Illustration No. 5 shows a silk gimp brocaded with gold thread in a vine pattern. This example dates from the seventeenth century.

It is hoped that the study of this collection may be especially helpful to the student, and that it will also have an influence in encouraging the use of the best material in articles of the kind that may be made at the present day.

SAMUEL BRIDGE DEAN.

NOTE.—The collection of Old Galloons described by Mr. Dean was recently presented by him to this Museum. There is also in the Museum an instructive exhibit of material illustrating the method of making these gold and silver fabrics, such as tinsels, *paillettes*, metallic thread and wire and powdered gilding, the gift of the German Commissioners at the Centennial Exposition in 1876.—EDITOR.